

CART RETURN CREDIT SYSTEM

Abstract of the Disclosure

One aspect of the invention is directed to a system and method for providing an
5 incentive to a customer of a store to return a shopping cart to a cart return location. The
cart return location, such as a cart corral, has a plurality of detection loops at an entrance
to the corral. The system detects a change in inductance of the loops when a cart is
returned to the cart corral and generates a cart return signal, which is indicative of a
10 returned cart, in response to the change of inductance. The system determines whether
a cart is being removed from or returned to the cart corral by use of the multiple
detection loops. Alternatively, a radio frequency identification system may be used to
detect the return of a cart. The store customer may utilize a frequent shopper, loyalty or
15 reward card to provide a customer identification code to the system. Alternatively,
other interfaces, such as a keypad, are provided for receiving the customer identification
code. The shopper is credited with points or credits in a frequent shopper or reward
program for returning the shopping cart to the cart return location. Visual and/or
audible feedback indicative of an action, for example credit given, may be provided to
the customer. An optional output interface may be used as a back-up mechanism or to
provide rewards. The cart return system, as disclosed may be readily configured to
20 integrate with a wide range of existing, or new frequent shopper or loyalty programs.